

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SPOP CH PFOR

SUBJECT: NCNA ARTICLE ON CHINESE POPULATION POLICY

SUMMARY: IN AN NCNA ARTICLE, THE PRC HAS STATED FLATLY THAT PLANNED POPULATION GROWTH IS AN ESTABLISHED POLICY OF THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT. THE ARTICLE GIVES REASONS FOR THE POLICY WHICH RELATE TO REDUCING POPULATION PRESSURE ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RESOURCES, AND CITES SPECIFIC MEASURES FOR FAMILY PLANNING INCLUDING LATE MARRIAGE, VARIOUS METHODS OF CONTRACEPTION AND ABORTION. END SUMMARY.

1. THE CONVENING OF THE WORLD POPULATION CONFERENCE IN BUCHAREST HAS LED TO A SPATE OF NCNA ARTICLES ON POPULATION. SOME HAVE FOCUSED ON THE CONFERENCE; OTHERS HAVE COMMENTED ON THE SUBJECT AS IT RELATES TO THE PRC. MOST INTERESTING OF THE LATTER WAS AN AUGUST 23 NCNA PIECE WHICH GAVE DETAILS OF CHINA'S NATIONWIDE POPULATION POLICY.

2. ENTITLED "CHINA ACHIEVES INITIAL SUCCESS IN PLANNED POPULATION GROWTH", THE ARTICLE SAYS THAT "PLANNED POPULATION GROWTH IS AN ESTABLISHED POLICY OF THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT," WHICH "IS WINNING ATTENTION AND SUPPORT FROM

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INCREASING NUMBERS OF PEOPLE." IT DENIES THAT THIS POLICY

IS CARRIED OUT BECAUSE OF AN OVERPOPULATION PROBLEM, BUT SAYS THAT IT IS NECESSARY FOR PROMOTING EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN, PROTECTION OF THE WELFARE OF MOTHERS AND CHILDREN, IMPROVING EDUCATION AND THE HEALTH OF THE PEOPLE, AND PROMOTING GREATER NATIONAL PROSPERITY.

3. ACCORDING TO THE ARTICLE, PRC POPULATION POLICY HAS TWO ASPECTS: 1) LOWERING THE DEATH RATE AND 2) "CARRYING OUT FAMILY PLANNING TO REGULATE THE BIRTH RATE." IT ADDS THAT IN DENSELY POPULATED AREAS, MEASURES ARE BEING TAKEN TO SLOW THE RATE OF POPULATION GROWTH, BUT IN SPARSELY POPULATED MINORITY AREAS IT NOTES THAT MEASURES ARE UNDERWAY TO INCREASE THE POPULATION (TWO DAYS LATER NCNA FOLLOWED WITH AN ARTICLE SPECIFICALLY DISCUSSING POPULATION GROWTH IN MINORITY REGIONS).

4. TURNING TO FAMILY PLANNING IN SPECIFIC, THE ARTICLE SAYS IT IS "VOLUNTARY," BUT ADDS THAT IT "HAS TAKEN ON A MASS CHARACTER." THE ARTICLE STRESSES THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL BODIES FROM THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL DOWN TO THE COMMUNE AND MUNICIPAL LEVEL "TO DIRECT FAMILY PLANNING AND GIVE SPECIFIC GUIDANCE IN COOPERATION WITH MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS". BELOW THE COMMUNE AND CITY LEVEL, IT REFERS TO THE EFFORTS OF BAREFOOT DOCTORS, "LECTURERS ON FAMILY PLANNING," MIDWIVES AND PHARMACY WORKERS, WHO CARRY THE MESSAGE TO RURAL AREAS, CITY NEIGHBORHOODS AND INTO THE FACTORIES.

5. REFERRING TO VARIOUS MEANS OF PRC BIRTH CONTROL, THE ARTICLE STATES THAT IN RURAL AREAS MEN AND WOMEN ARE ADVISED NOT TO MARRY BEFORE 25 AND 23, RESPECTIVELY. MARRIED COUPLES HAVE AVAILABLE A VARIETY OF CONTRACEPTIVE METHODS. ABORTION IS ALSO MENTIONED, THOUGH NOT BY NAME, IN A PASSAGE WHICH SAYS THAT "OPERATIONS AND HOSPITALIZATION FOR CONTRACEPTIVE PURPOSES ARE FREE OF CHARGE." THOSE WHO HAVE SUCH OPERATIONS, NCNA ADDS, ARE GIVEN TIME OFF FROM WORK AND RECEIVE FULL PAY WHILE THEY ARE ABSENT.

6. THE FINAL PORTION OF THE ARTICLE CONCENTRATES ON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MEASURES WHICH HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO LOWER CHINA'S DEATH RATE, SPECIFICALLY WITH REGARD TO INFANT MORTALITY. A FEW SELECTED COMPARATIVE FIGURES ARE GIVEN, INCLUDING A CLAIM THAT INFANT MORTALITY IN PEKING CITY PROPER HAS DECLINED FROM 117.6 PER THOUSAND IN 1949 TO 11.6 PER THOUSAND IN 1973 AND THAT WHILE THE "PRE-LIBERATION" FIGURE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE WAS 200 PER THOUSAND, IN 1973 ONE KIANGSU COUNTY HAD A RATE OF 33.9 PER THOUSAND

(STILL SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER THAN THE URBAN FIGURE GIVEN FOR PEKING).

7. COMMENT: OUR RECORDS HERE DO NOT GO VERY FAR BACK, BUT OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT THIS IS PERHAPS THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE STATEMENT ON PRC BIRTH CONTROL POLICY ISSUED IN RECENT YEARS. WHILE IT DENIES THAT THE POLICY RESULTS FROM OVERPOPULATION, THE REASONS GIVEN FOR THE POLICY (PARA 2 ABOVE) ARE ALL ONES WHICH RELATE TO THE PRESSURES WHICH RAPIDLY EXPANDING POPULATIONS EXERT ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RESOURCES.

8. THE ARTICLE CLEARLY INDICATES THAT WHATEVER THE ANTI-SUPER POWER RHETORIC USED IN BUCHAREST, PRC LEADERS ARE WELL AWARE OF THEIR OWN POPULATION PROBLEM AND ARE TAKING ACTION. HOW SUCCESSFUL THEY HAVE BEEN TO DATE IS OF COURSE ANOTHER MATTER.
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